1   <u>ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE</u>

2   A method and apparatus for directing messages through a network

3 wherein multiple tables for directing messages through the network are

4 maintained and provided. Each table corresponds to a virtual private network

5 and contains routing information specific to that virtual private network. A

6 separate routing table is maintained for each VPN. In one embodiment the

7 messages are forwarded using plain IP forwarding using a route table

8 associated with the VPN. In another embodiment separate forwarding tables

9 using labels are generated for each virtual private network. The messages

10 are forwarded by looking up the label in the table corresponding to the VPN

11 In a third embodiment, a single forwarding table is utilized where the table is

12 built based on separate routing tables for each virtual private network.